

**JOINT WORK SESSION OF THE COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
FOR THE CITY OF NOVI  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 1997 - 7:30 P.M.  
ACTIVITIES ROOM - NOVI CIVIC CENTER - 45175 W. TEN MILE ROAD**

Mayor McLallen called the meeting to order at 7:35 P.M.

**PURPOSE OF JOINT WORK SESSION OF CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION**

**1. Get Acquainted as Individuals in an Informal Setting - 7:35 p.m. until 8:10 p.m.**

**ROLL CALL: City Council:** Mayor McLallen, Mayor ProTem Crawford (absent/excused), Council Members Clark, Kramer, Mitzel, Mutch, Schmid (absent/excused)

**Planning Commission:** Chair Weddington, Vice-Chair Hoadley, Planning Commission Members Bononi, Canup (absent/excused), Capello, Churella, Csordas, Vrettas, Watza

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

**Lynn Kocan** - 23088 Ennishore Drive, spoke about Planning Commission issues from last year regarding industrial development on Nine Mile Road. She explained Nine Mile Road supports different load levels in different intervals of the roadway. Ms. Kocan reported Nine Mile Road is a Class A road from Novi Road to Heslip Drive; a Class B road from Heslip Drive to Venture Drive; and a Class E road, east of Venture Drive into the more residential portion of Nine Mile Road. In February 1997, Ms. Kocan advised that Mr. Jerome sent a memo to Mr. Pham in the Planning Department advising that the best way to restrict truck traffic is by reclassification. She stated he also advised they would make a possible recommendation to Council at a future date. As Ms. Kocan stated to the Planning Commission last week, it is now August, Harada Industry is open for business and eighteen wheel semi-truck traffic is traversing Nine Mile Road to the east through the residential neighborhoods and subsequent roads that are not intended for heavy truck traffic. Ms. Kocan understands Council is going to request grant money to rebuild Nine Mile Road in the industrial corridor Monday evening and advised that these trucks are tearing the road apart. She stated if the city continues to permit the easterly truck travel from Venture Drive, they must repair more roads. Ms. Kocan urged Council and the Commission to require the proper signage to be posted on Nine Mile Road to direct traffic appropriately on the industrial route to insure against further degeneration.

Secondly, Ms. Kocan asked under which ordinance will the current outstanding projects being reviewed for development for light industrial abutting residential be reviewed? Ms.

Kocan requested that ordinances within the zoning ordinance that are ready for II Reading become effective immediately upon the II Reading to insure consistency and compatibility of all the developments being proposed. She asked Council to remember that overall, ordinances are only as good as their enforcement.

Ms. Kocan advised the third item is regarding the amount of time residents are permitted to speak during Audience Participation. She explained she would like to see residents get the same time consideration as developers.

Lastly, Ms. Kocan advised she has had the opportunity to attend Implementation Committee meetings over the last two years and understands that Council has not always been pleased with the speed of the committee. However, Ms. Kocan assured Council that the committee did a thorough review of the assigned tasks in the order that they received them.

## **2. Discussion of Roles and Responsibilities - of Each Body Separately and Mutually**

Mayor McLallen advised the purpose of the joint discussion is to discuss the events of the past year and the non-relationship that exists as a whole between Council and the Planning Commission. Mayor McLallen believes a personal goal for herself and Chair Weddington was to do something to remedy that relationship. She added that the work load is enormous and she believes they need to address it as expeditiously and professionally as possible. Therefore, they believed as a first step that an informal meeting of the two bodies was in order.

Chair Weddington added that they are trying to get a good start and believes they should meet more frequently. She would like to see a better relationship established and suggested that they begin by defining the different roles. She added if the two bodies can agree about how they can work together, that it would be better for the city long term.

Mayor McLallen interjected, tonight's minutes will consist only of the roll call and highlights.

### **A. Objectives of Each Body**

### **B. Authority and Responsibility of Council & Planning Commission**

Mayor McLallen reported legislature clearly outlines their roles. She explained the City Charter governs City Council and PA 285 governs the Planning Commission.

Mayor McLallen advised City Council members are elected in two or four year cycles, and are charged with establishing the city's financial productivity and answer directly to the citizens. The Mayor added that they deal directly with the citizens and the Administration

in a fairly formal manner. Mayor McLallen reported the City Manager's office serves as the primary source for communications and concluded by stating that Council responds to external influences.

On the other hand, Mayor McLallen reported that the Planning Commission responds to internal influences. She explained the Planning Commission's responsibility is to develop the Master Plan as a living document. She added that the Master Plan has remained the same since the beginning of the city and although it changes, the heart of it remains the same in that it supports low density and environmental attractiveness. She added Novi is also a city that separates its nonresidential uses from residential uses. Mayor McLallen believes the amazing thing during the thirty years that the city has been one of the top growing communities in the area is how closely they have stood by their goals.

As significant bodies, Mayor McLallen believes they must deal with reality and keep themselves educated as to what is actually in Novi. Further, the Mayor asked if the bodies can come to a consensus about what is actually coming forward for budget purposes because she does not want the same thing to occur this year as last year. She further added that although the budget cycle is twelve months, the political cycle is two years and believes they need to understand what they can accomplish in those kinds of cycles. She has learned that they need to be very focused to ensure that they produce the best work.

Chair Weddington added that the charge of the Planning Commission comes from a state statute that each member takes an oath to uphold. She added that the statute specifically dictates that their work and decisions be based upon on the Master Plan and the city's ordinances. Further, Chair Weddington believes the Planning Commission has a responsibility to study and make recommendations about problematic ordinances. She explained they accomplish this by sending the ordinance to a Planning Commission committee or to Council's Ordinance Review committee for further review and action.

Chair Weddington reported the Planning Commission currently has concerns about infrastructure and the industrial base in terms of the OST before them. She added that she believes they are in a position to focus on quality issues.

Chair Weddington also believes they need to develop a better image with non-retail areas (industrial tax base) while still protecting their natural resources. She added that she believes that they have already developed the easy pieces and the challenge is to find creative alternatives (i.e., open space planning). Chair Weddington does not believe it is their job to make it easy for developers, but she does believe they need to establish working relationships through open communication and free exchange.

Mayor McLallen believes the two bodies need to improve their communications better. She advised staff recently proposed E-mail for Council.

Mayor McLallen advised she has the authority to appoint Planning Commissioners with Council's concurrence. She added that she has made appointments with the intention of appointing those who have the capability to work together and represent the broad spectrum within the community. She stated their goal is still to achieve what is best for the community and asked if there are any issues any member would like to bring forward.

Vice-Chair Hoadley believes this forum is excellent and encourages similar meetings four times a year. Secondly, Vice-Chair Hoadley reported that he served on their budget committee and he was somewhat disappointed that the Planning Commission had their communications budget cut.

Vice-Chair Hoadley believes having the seminars publicly broadcasted would have served as a good public relations source for Council, the Planning Commission and the community at large. He encouraged Council to fund those issues next year because it permits them to have a better informed city. He added that bringing this information to the city is less expensive. He also suggested that a Council member sit in on their budget meetings to guide them in the future. Vice-Chair Hoadley would also like to have more funding included in the budget to provide other planning tools similar to the overlay map. He explained this map is a living document and its intent is to show development according to the Master Plan.

### **C. Communication & Cooperation between Council & Planning Commission**

Chair Weddington believes the communication goes both ways and she believes it would be beneficial to receive more feedback to better understand Council's action in terms of the Planning Commission's budget or other initiatives.

Councilman Mitzel stated the communication issue came up periodically during the budget discussions and Council determined that the Public Information Director should coordinate the initiative so that they could use their resources wisely.

Mayor McLallen added that the city staff has recently changed dramatically which would also impact the process. She advised staff has been added to the Manager's Office to support the Public Information Director and believes this addition will be useful for this initiative. The Mayor added that she has recently discovered that the penetration of cable is 75% of the homes in Novi and she asked if any of the members have any thoughts about how they can package their communication efforts.

Councilman Kramer recalled they are working toward having E-mail and believes it will be a convenient informal way to communicate back and forth.

As a member of the Budget Committee, Commissioner Churella believes they followed the budget and he was surprised about the items that were removed without any explanation. He complimented Commissioner Bononi for taking the time to recruit speakers to talk about how they can make their city better at no cost. He then suggested that Council should tell them how much money the Planning Commission has to spend and how they want them to spend it.

Councilman Mitzel believes posting information on Web sites would be a useful source. He added there are currently two network drops available in the Chamber that Planning Commissioners can utilize during their meetings for access to ordinances, minutes and agendas. He reported GIS and maps are not yet available through the network, but once they are ready he believes they will install more drops. He noted it is only connected to the internal network, but the city staff is currently working on connecting to the outside.

Councilman Vrettas believes the Internet is a good communicator, but noted that what is communicated is what the sending person wants someone to hear and is not necessarily what actually occurred. He would like the public still to be able to see for themselves.

Mayor McLallen characterizes the two bodies relationship as copartners with very specific roles. She added that she realizes that Council has the final say because they are the elected body. However, she does not view it as an unequal partnership.

Chair Weddington discussed the SEMCOG study that compared the fiscal impact of traditional development versus compact development. She reported that the Planning Department has obtained additional copies and has arranged to have Pat Burnett from SEMCOG attend the next Planning Commission (August 20, 1997) for a special presentation because Novi was one of the eighteen communities targeted. She added that Commissioner Bononi brought this study to their attention.

Councilwoman Mutch added that Pat Burnett is a resident of Novi. Councilwoman Mutch then offered two suggestions in terms of communications. She believes there is a misconception that Council has a fixed idea about how they distribute the money. She explained they are told how much revenue there is and how much was spent in the prior year, then the various commissions working with the department heads that they are most closely aligned with submit their request. She suggested that Council specifically provide a written statement at the point they alter a request during the budgetary process. She noted that Council currently gives directive to staff to find other ways to accomplish the request and a cut does not mean they should not do it. She also suggested that the Mayor and the Planning Commission Chair plan to meet on a regular basis to exchange information between the two bodies.

Mayor McLallen advised they have already made that commitment to communicate. She added that she believes the EDC is another group that they need to actively involve in the communication loop and suggested that they schedule a meeting of all three bodies.

Commissioner Vrettas reported that the education field uses a budget standard that provides them with an amount and lets them spend it as they will. He added that research has determined that it is a positive process because it empowers people and causes them to take ownership and responsibility of their spending.

Councilman Kramer believes during the budget process that the two bodies should achieve an understanding of similar goals and determine where they should be placing their resources. He further supports periodic joint meetings.

### **3. Two Year Goals & Objectives**

Mayor McLallen believes the biggest crisis that the city is facing is a balance to its tax base. She explained for the past five years they generated 52% of their tax base from residential housing. She said if any one of their major nonresidential taxpayers chose to leave, the tax burden would fall further on the homeowners. She asked if they feel a major challenge for the two bodies is to seek a nonresidential investment in the community?

Vice-Chair Hoadley agreed. However, he would first state that he believes they should broaden their vision on communications and planning. He would like to see Novi take a leadership role by forming a regional planning commission funded by eight to ten nearby communities.

Mayor McLallen asked if they find that their primary goal is a residential issue.

Commissioner Csordas said if they find that primary issue is about residential, then it should be a common goal.

Commissioner Churella does not believe the issue is about residential. He believes they should be looking for a high-tech and an office base that will supplement some of their tax base. He believes their common goal should be to encourage this kind of growth and not make it difficult for them to come to Novi.

Commissioner Capello would like to see the Taft Road extension move forward.

Mayor McLallen understands that should be under construction in 1998. She believes there are some long range issues regarding the right-of-way.

Commissioner Capello would also like to see the Grand River corridor move forward to control growth and added he is satisfied with the movement of the Town Center. Finally, he advised that they need to provide direction to Linda Lemke to prepare a report about how they should propose the southwest quadrant for development.

Councilman Mitzel believes their overall common goal is to provide quality development in Novi. He reminded the other members that the makeup of Council is changing in November and he does not know to what extent that they should define their goals and objectives.

Mayor McLallen shares the concern, but added they do not have time to waste for that very same reason.

Then Councilman Mitzel believes their objectives should include road issues, the architectural review process and undeveloped properties.

Commissioner Vrettas believes the growth is inevitable and asked if they support whether it will be helter skelter or reasonable planning. He believes they need to send the message to the community that the city is in control and only do what they believe is in the best interest of Novi

Commissioner Csordas believes they need a more diverse nonresidential tax generating industry so that the residents do not experience an economic downturn and tax increases.

Mayor McLallen believes one issue is about where is the most appropriate place to put the OST District in terms of the Master Plan. She also noted another critical area is the large parcel has been artificially cut off from the rest of the community by M-5.

Vice-Chair Hoadley agrees with Member Csordas in that they should re-master plan sensitive areas to encourage non-residential growth. He reported the Master Plan and Zoning Committee is currently reviewing the Twelve Mile corridor from M-5 to Beck Road. He added that the Planning Commission needs further direction about service stations and cellular antennas.

Mayor McLallen replied Council discussed those matters last Monday night.

Commissioner Vrettas would like to eliminate cookie cutter subdivisions.

Mayor McLallen suggested that the Planning Commission revisit the similar/dissimilar ordinance. Chair Weddington advised the Implementation Committee is reviewing that matter. Mayor McLallen recalled this was a major issue approximately nine years ago and that perhaps it may be time to refine it again.

Vice-Chair Hoadley encouraged Council to increase the Building Department's budget. He explained that he believes they have great ordinances, but they need better enforcement. Mayor McLallen advised that they attempted to increase that budget during the past year and they rejected it. Vice-Chair Hoadley suggested that they consider an auxiliary of retirees to assist the ordinance officers.

Chair Weddington believes there is a consensus among the members about encouraging further economic development in the high-tech industrial base. However, she also does not want to lose sight of environmental issues. She referred to the 20/20 Mission Statement and its reference to the desire to maintain the environmental beauty of the community.

Councilman Kramer agrees one of their highest priorities is to provide a balanced tax base. However, he also does not want to minimize environmental concerns. He added that the M-5 area should also take priority on their action list.

Commissioner Capello believes they need to change the way they protect environmental areas. He referred to Mystic Forest as an example of a development that did not turn out how they anticipated it would turn out.

Mayor McLallen agreed and noted that she was appalled when she visited that project. She also cited the pond at River Oaks as an area of concern, but added that Briarwood has matured and seems to have mitigated itself. She believes they also need to determine who is responsible for the trees when the damage does not appear for several years. She also believes there must be something incorrect about how the basins are functioning and that perhaps they need to study that issue.

Vice-Chair Hoadley advised they changed the course of storm water management in 1981 by converting to an almost 100% regional detention system. He explained the idea was instead of having on site retention and detention that were not being properly maintained that the run off would go into the wetlands to eventually develop a regional basin. The problem is that they were unable to control the erosion when the wetlands filled with water and killed the trees. He believes they need a compromise and encourages further study on this issue.

Commissioner Bononi advised there will be a revised wetland ordinance before them shortly and asked that they read it carefully. She added that she believes the regional attitude will dissolve and that they need to look at alternatives for retention on site. She added that they need to watch their water quality carefully. Commissioner Bononi is also disappointed about the budget cuts made to Planning Commission studies.

Mayor McLallen believes joint meetings between the two bodies are beneficial and suggested that they meet quarterly. She reported the goal for tonight's meeting was to create a quality city through the partnership of the two bodies. Further, she believes they have reached a consensus to focus on economic development for a more balanced community with particular concentration on the M-5 corridor, the new Taft Road, Grand River Avenue and the Town Center area. She added that they also share an overriding concern about environmental issues and understands that one of their goals is to educate the homeowner. Another goal is about how they can provide quality projects in terms of aesthetics (architectural and facade review). Finally, she encouraged the two bodies to continue to cultivate communications, especially during the budget process.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before City Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:49 P.M.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

Transcribed by Barbara Holmes

Date Approved: August 25, 1997